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## Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Lord, as we begin this new week, we claim that You are in our midst. Fill this Senate Chamber with Your glory. May we humbly trust You as the sovereign Lord of our lives and of America.

Because Your strength is limitless, our inner wells need never be empty. Your strength is artesian, constantly surging up to give us exactly what we need in every moment. You give us supernatural thinking power beyond our IQ; You provide emotional equipoise when we are under pressure; You engender resoluteness in our wills and vision for our leadership; and You energize our bodies with physical resiliency.

Lord, quiet our turbulent hearts with Your unqualified, indefatigable love. Give us profound confidence, security, and peace. We have absolute trust in Your faithfulness and we commit ourselves to You anew. Tune our hearts to the frequency of Your inner voice. Give us the clarity as we need to lead our Nation. In Your never-failing power, we humbly pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader from Alabama is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business until the hour of 12 noon. At noon, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider

the treaty on NATO enlargement. It is hoped that Senators will come to the floor to debate the treaty and to offer amendments. As a reminder to all Members, a rollcall vote will occur this evening at 6 p.m. on the confirmation of the nomination of Scott Fleming to be Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Congressional Affairs at the Department of Education.

As a further reminder, a rollcall vote will occur on the State Department reorganization conference report at 2:25 p.m. on Tuesday, April 28. This will not necessarily be the first vote of Tuesday's session, and the Members will be notified of an updated voting schedule.

Also during this week's session, the Senate could be asked to consider the supplemental appropriations conference report, if available from the conference committee.

In addition, the Senate could be asked to consider, possibly under a brief time agreement, the Work-Force Development Act. A couple of amendments are expected to be offered, and, as always, Members will be notified as the schedule becomes clearer later in the week.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business.

The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. FORD pertaining to the introduction of S. 1989 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. THOMAS, is recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes.

Mr. THOMAS. Thank you, Mr. President.

### PRIORITIES

VISION 20-20

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, this is a morning with a little bit of break between issues. It is an opportunity, it seems to me, to share some of the thoughts some of us have as priorities. Obviously, when we get involved in a particular bill, as we did last week, it took the whole week. Some of the things we care a lot about we tend to sort of set aside.

I speak this morning briefly on a couple of issues that I think are very important, and are particularly important to me. One is the bill called Vision 20-20. It is the product of a great deal of effort that we put in in the Parks Subcommittee with respect to revitalizing our national parks. We have had one hearing in the subcommittee. We have another planned for this week. Finally, we will have four hearings and then, hopefully, bring it to the floor sometime in May or early June.

National parks, of course, are increasingly well thought of in this country. They are increasingly popular. Visitations go up. We have more and more people taking advantage of the parks, parks that preserve either natural resources or cultural resources that have been a tradition.

We celebrated last year the 125th anniversary of the first park, Yellowstone Park in Wyoming, as a matter of fact. Unfortunately, at the same time that we have increased our caring about parks, we find ourselves, according to the park agency, in addition to being \$5 billion behind in the infrastructure, taking care of those parks and preserving those parks. The purpose, of course, of a park is to preserve those resources, whether they be natural or cultural. But equally as important, and the second issue, certainly is to provide a

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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pleasant visit to the owners of the park who are the people of the United States. That, of course, becomes more difficult as this infrastructure needs repair.

We are seeking to do a number of things. We are seeking to increase the resources that are available that will be supplemental to the budget money, to the tax money that all taxpayers pay, by doing things like extending the fee period where additional trial fees have been added to the parks, and to extend that for some time to see that people who enter the park can actually share more of the responsibility of paying for it. We are also talking about a stamp, collectible stamps, such as a duck stamp, in which the resources would go to the park. We are talking about those people who come on international tours to be able as part of their tour to buy a 30-day entry to parks with some of those funds going to national parks.

We are talking about bonding many of the larger parks. Have things like streets and sewers, and it is very difficult to keep those up on annual budgets. So we are seeking to do that which is difficult since there is no real capital budget in the Federal establishment at work in doing that.

In addition, we hope to give an opportunity for taxpayers to deduct a portion of their return—the money that comes back to them—and dedicate it to the parks, if they choose to. We think that is an opportunity to support the parks and those people who care a great deal about it.

In addition, we are talking about the management. I think that is fair because they have more resources. There is evidence, of course, that management is not always what it might be. The most recent one, of course, is the cost of some of the construction there that has been extremely, unusually, inappropriately high. We are asking that there be a strategic plan, that is a national strategic plan also revisited on down to each unit, and that each unit have a strategic plan that complies with the flat plan. That has a measurable goal in it. This is a large business; there needs to be planning for it.

We are talking about the concessions—the way that the concessions can contribute more financially to the parks. They are a commercial function within the park. We would like to see more private expertise in the management of these kinds of commercial activities within the Park Service. We also would like to have it more competitive so that people who want to get into the business can do that. We deal with the preferential right. In addition to that, of course, in order to invest millions of dollars, there needs to be some proprietary interest protecting that as well.

These are some of the things we are doing. We are talking about education of the park employees, which I think is an advantage for them. Park employees are some of the most committed

people I know of in the Federal Government to their role in the parks.

We are excited about that, and hope that can be one of the things that this Congress accomplishes as they strengthen in making sure that the parks are going to be there for us in the next century and, therefore, our kids and our grandkids.

#### THE BUDGET PROCESS

Mr. President, we are also working, I think, as we move on into the allocation of funds through the budget and through the appropriations. I think we ought to take another look at a 2-year budget. We are going to find ourselves spending at least half of this year talking about budgeting and appropriations. Many State legislatures have shown that it is successful to do it on a biannual basis. What we ought to do, in my opinion—and we are also joined by the chairman of the Budget Committee, as well as the majority and minority whip—is that we ought to do this on a 2-year basis so that we can do it 1 year, set up the budgets the next year, and have oversight, which is something we need to do more of in Congress. I think it is good for agencies. They would have a longer period of time to know what resources are available to them. Somehow we don't seem to be able to get to it. It is a reasonable procedural thing that we ought to do. But, as is often the case and too often the case in Government and in this Congress, we have always done it that way. That is not a good enough reason. That is not a good enough reason. If there are ways we can do things more efficiently, if there are ways we can do things that will produce better results, that is what we ought to be doing. I am persuaded that is one of them.

We are also in the process of trying to set up a system that provides for more entrepreneurial private involvement in some of the things that Government does. Basically, we have a bill that will probably be heard in the House this week that simply says to OMB to define those things that are basically commercial in nature, that are done by the Federal Government, and then require under the so-called 876 process that each of those kinds of things be made available for private contracting if you can show that it can be done more efficiently that way.

The private contractor should get to bid on those things that are basically commercial in nature and be more efficient. We reduce the size of Government, and I think it makes a lot of sense. Of course, some of the labor unions in the Government agencies are not excited about that. The fact is that many of those people would be also doing the same thing in the private sector, and probably would be at least as well off.

These are some of the things that we are doing.

#### ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. President, I guess as an expression of some frustration, I have been

hearing reports of last week's talk about education. I am surprised, frankly, that the national media has promoted some of the kinds of things that simply, it seems to me, are not the basis of the discussion. Yesterday, on TV, I heard them sitting around for 20 minutes talking about the idea that this bill was simply to define private school funding. It is not what it is about at all. It provides an opportunity for people to have a savings to use for their own children during kindergarten through college, an expansion of the \$500 credit that is now \$2,000 set aside. It is your money. It is not tax money. It is money that you are allowed to set aside after taxes but the income has not been taxed.

But the real issue, and what seems to be missed by most people, is what should the involvement of the Federal Government be in elementary and secondary education. What we are really debating is whether or not there ought to be a set of Federal entitlements set up that would go on forever by the Federal Government and would eventually, of course, impede or infringe upon local control of elementary and secondary schools. That is what the debate was about.

I am surprised sometimes that does not seem to permeate through the national media. Part of that is, of course, because the administration and our friends on the other side of the aisle tried to make that point. I guess when we govern and people are involved in self-government, as we all should be doing, that there has to be some semblance of factual information going out to people so that they can be involved.

I spoke this morning with a group of kids. There is one from each State here to talk about Government. The point that I try to make and that all of us try to make is that this is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, and that all of us should try to make that democracy work, to make the Constitution work, to make the system work, and that we have to participate. To participate, you have to have some facts, not media hype, and not show business, but facts.

It seems to me, increasingly prompted some by politicians, to be sure, that we find ourselves more and more being faced with the political process becoming something of show business. That is not what it is. It is government deciding based on facts what is best for freedom, freedom for democracy, and for the American people. It is frustrating from time to time that those issues that are really basic to the decisions get lost somewhere. They get lost somewhere. I find them frustrating.

It is interesting, Mr. President, that in your home State,—as it is in Wyoming, where yesterday I had conversations—you hear things that are totally different than with some you talk with here. It is really interesting that folks at home are thinking about those things that are really important to them, and here we are talking about

the gossip. But that is the way it works. So we all will continue to make it work that way.

Mr. President, as you can tell, I have used this opportunity to share some of the concerns and interests that I have having to do with national parks, having to do with allowing the private sector to participate in many of the things that are commercial in nature in the Government; talking about what I think is a more efficient manner of handling our budget on a 2-year budget cycle, and using the other year to have oversight to ensure those dollars are being spent in the best way they can.

They complain a little bit, I guess, which is OK, all of us do it, about the lack of ability to really portray and get out into the public the real issues and the real controversies. That is what we are really about here—is talking about different views and different directions. And to the extent that all of us can participate in making those decisions through the political process, which is how we govern ourselves, then it's important, I think—vital—to have that information available.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, April 24, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,505,293,755,428.21 (Five trillion, five hundred five billion, two hundred ninety-three million, seven hundred fifty-five thousand, four hundred twenty-eight dollars and twenty-one cents).

One year ago, April 24, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,343,217,000,000 (Five trillion, three hundred forty-three billion, two hundred seventeen million).

Twenty-five years ago, April 24, 1973, the federal debt stood at \$455,284,000,000 (Four hundred fifty-five billion, two hundred eighty-four million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,050,009,755,428.21 (Five trillion, fifty billion, nine million, seven hundred fifty-five thousand, four hundred twenty-eight dollars and twenty-one cents) during the past 25 years.

#### THE MISSOURI RIVER ENERGY SERVICES

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, today I would like to share with my colleagues a development that is occurring in my region with an organization that has long been an agent of change. The Missouri Basin Municipal Power Agency is a joint action agency that provides affordable electricity, through its 58 municipal utility members, to over 200,000 consumers in my home state of South Dakota, and to citizens of North Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa.

The agency was formed in 1960 to coordinate municipalities' efforts to negotiate the purchase of power and energy from the Federal government. In 1970, the Federal government informed public power systems in the region that their growing power supply needs

could no longer be met through the Federal hydropower program. Missouri Basin stepped in and met the supplemental power supply of its member communities by participating in, among other arrangements, the Laramie River Station coal-fired plant, one of the cleanest coal plants in the country.

Over the years, the agency has played a vital role in meeting the energy needs of the region. The agency has promoted integrated resource planning, carried out an aggressive tree planting program, and continued to provide its customers with affordable, reliable electricity.

Faced with a changing electricity market, Missouri Basin this month changed its name to Missouri River Energy Services, signaling its readiness to embrace a new era in which utilities will provide many added services and benefits for their customers. Missouri River Energy Services is rising to meet this challenge admirably.

I appreciate the work Missouri River Energy Services has done for our communities and wish the agency the best of luck as it helps forge the future of the electricity industry.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### PROTOCOLS TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY OF 1949 ON ACCESSION OF POLAND, HUNGARY, AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now go into executive session and proceed to the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 16, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Treaty Document No. 105-36, Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

The Senate resumed consideration of the treaty.

Mr. HELMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, prior to the Easter recess, there was some rather spirited discussion on the question of NATO expansion, and the debate so

far has shown, I believe, that most Senators are reaching the correct conclusion that bringing Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into the NATO alliance is the right thing to do.

To be sure, there are some commentators who vow they know more than all the rest of us and who make a living on the talk shows and in newspaper op-ed pages, and they have been wringing their hands declaring how awful it is that the U.S. Senate is not taking this vital foreign policy issue seriously. How awful, they lament, it is that the Senate is not paying adequate attention to this important issue.

Sometimes when I hear comments completely off the wall like that, I am tempted to say to these know-it-alls, "Heal thyselfes." In fact, most of them have ignored the debate that the Senate has been having for months on this issue, and most of the commentators have been following something else, maybe an intern at the White House, or whatever. If they had been paying attention, they would have known why the Senate today appears to have reached a broad consensus as to the wisdom of NATO expansion and they would not be confusing that consensus with the lack of serious discussion and debate.

The fact is, Mr. President, we have been working with the administration leaders for 9 straight months now to fix their original approach to the NATO expansion. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate NATO observer group have made concerted efforts to address the contentious issue early on precisely to ensure that the major problems with NATO expansion were addressed by the time 12 noon today arrived and we reached the Senate floor with this proposal.

Last fall, when we began the Foreign Relations Committee's extensive hearings on NATO expansion, I gave the administration a clear warning emphasizing that there was a right way and a wrong way to expand NATO and that, in my view, and in the view of many Senators, the administration was doing it the wrong way.

Some may recall that when Secretary Albright first came to testify before the Foreign Relations Committee, I told that fine lady that while I wanted to be helpful to her in achieving Senate ratification of NATO expansion, it was essential that we work together to fix what was wrong with the administration's approach and make sure it was done the right way. During the ensuing months, that is precisely what we have done.

We have held eight—count them—eight separate hearings in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to discuss and debate every aspect of the administration's plan for NATO expansion. We heard from 38 different witnesses, who testified at some length each, and we produced a hearing transcript that is 552 printed pages long.

In the Foreign Relations Committee, we had worked with Secretary Albright